







ARAKANSA SUPREME COURT

Justices							
Confidence Score	Mild Republican	Indeterminate	Mild Republican	Strong Republican	Indeterminate	Mild Republican	Indeterminate
Opinion Partners		✓			✓		
Dissenting Minority							
Determining Majority	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lone Dissenter		✓					

SUMMARY

- ▶ Number of justices: **7**
- ▶ Number of cases: **257**
- ▶ Percentage of cases with a unanimous ruling: **55.6% (143)**
- ▶ Justice most often writing the majority opinion: **Justice Kemp (35)**
- ▶ Per curiam decisions: **54**
- ▶ Concurring opinions: **30**
- ▶ Justice with most concurring opinions: **Justice Hart (18)**
- ▶ Dissenting opinions: **97**
- ▶ Justice with most dissenting opinions: **Justice Hart (76)**

COURT CONTENTION

Opinion partners

In 2020, 22 cases before the Arkansas Supreme Court had at least two dissents. Justices Hart and Wynne allied in dissent five times, and Justices Hart and Woods allied in dissent five times, which was more frequently than any other justices on the court. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Hart and Wynne both recorded Indeterminate Confidence Scores, which means that there was not enough data on their partisan affiliation to determine confidently whether they were affiliated with the Republican or Democratic party when they were elected to the court. Justice Wood recorded a Mild Republican Confidence Score.

Dissenting minority

In 2020, the Arkansas Supreme Court decided seven cases by split decision. No justice dissented in all seven of those decisions. Justice Hart dissented five times, which was more than any other justice on the court. No group of four justices dissented together more than once in 2020.

Determining majority

No justice was in the majority for all seven cases decided by split decision. Justices Hudson, Kemp, Womack, and Wynne each ruled in the majority in five of those seven cases. Because different justices joined the majority in each case, there was no identifiable pattern to discern a determining majority.

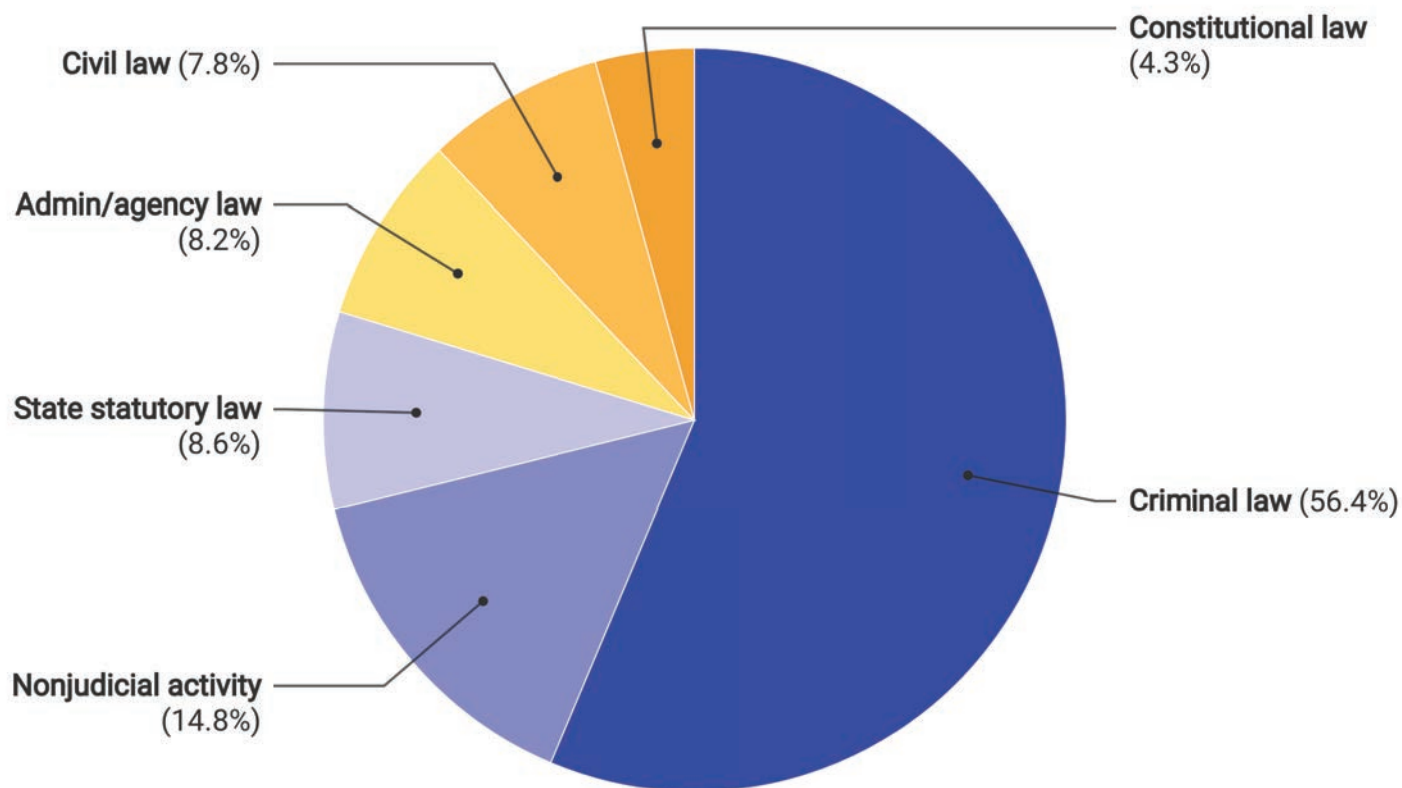
Lone dissenter

In 2020, Justice Hart dissented alone 68 times, which was more than any other justice. Justice Hart also had the most concurring opinions with 18. There was a lone dissenter in 85 cases in 2020.

COURT JURISDICTION

Article 7, Section 4 of the Arkansas Constitution describes the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. (This was later amended by Amendment 80, Section 2.) The court has appellate jurisdiction. It may transfer a case from lower courts in certain circumstances or bring special proceedings to the higher court as outlined in Article VI. The court also has a supervisory role over all other courts in the state, over the conduct of attorneys and over the practice of law within the state.

Case types decided by the Arkansas State Supreme Court, 2020



BALLOTPEDIA

The most common case category heard by the Arkansas Supreme Court in 2020 was criminal law. Of the 257 cases it heard, 145 were Criminal cases, or 56.4 percent of its caseload for the year. A criminal case involves a final criminal appeal before the court of last resort.

The second most common cases that reached the supreme court were nonjudicial activity. A case is considered nonjudicial activity if it does not involve a formal hearing and discussion before the court. The Arkansas Supreme Court decided 38 nonjudicial activity cases in 2020, or 14.8 percent of its total caseload for the year.

The third most common cases that reached the court were state statutory law. A state statutory case involves the violation or enforcement of a state statute. The Arkansas Supreme Court heard 22 state statutory law cases in 2020, or 8.6 percent of its total caseload for the year.